



# Black Magic

A Journey of Black Music in America

UCO Archives and Special Collections  
Max Chambers Library  
University of Central Oklahoma

Edmond, OK  
2019

## SPECIAL THANKS

UCO Music Prof. Sandra Thompson, D.M.A. and Troy Small, former UCO graduate student, will guide us on a journey through the evolution of Black music from the field songs of plantation slaves to the birth of Hip Hop music. Accomplished musicians Small, bass-baritone, and Eric Grigg, pianist, will perform *Langston Hughes in Art Song* in this multimedia exhibition. The event is a product of the collaborative efforts of the Archives and Special Collections, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Department of Music. The opening, an interdisciplinary and multicultural engagement in academic studies, provides a transformative learning experience for the UCO community and the surrounding area. We want to thank our sponsors, Friends of the Library and Inclusion in Art for their support of the refreshments and music performances. We are grateful to be able to share this exhibit. We would like to thank those who had a hand in making this exhibition possible.

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Nicole Willard, Asst. Executive Director, Max Chambers Library

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## FOREWORD

This is an exciting time for the Max Chambers Library with its growing art collections. UCO Archives has been expanding its collaborative programs with various departments, colleges, and organizations on and off campus to make the collections an integral part of the academic curricula. It was our honor to be a part of the Native American Heritage Month Task Force and their programs this past November. Now, we continue with the Black History and Women's History Month Task Force.

Through these collaborations Chambers Library is serving as a cultural resource center offering opportunities in object-based research within a global context. These openings also provide student interns in the UCO Archives and Special Collections a chance to develop their curatorial and research proficiencies. Interns learn a host of skills emphasizing student professional development in the archives and museum fields, including collection management, data management, collection research, collection care and curatorial studies.

This month, the UCO Library is excited to be part of celebrating Black History Month (BHM) through the history of Black music in the United States. We are fortunate to have Dr. Sandra Thompson from the Music Department as a guest speaker, as well as our library colleague and musician, Troy Anthony Small. Small will be presenting and performing accompanied by Eric Grigg. The art exhibition is curated by UCO Archives student worker, and Museum Studies Graduate student, Amena Butler. Thanks to her efforts, the Library received support from a local non-profit organization, Inclusion In Art, who generously sponsored the musical performances.

Through the various programs we offer, Chambers Library strives to provide a place for discussion. We do not shy away from openly tackling the complex issues of gender inequality, racial and LGBTQ discrimination, and cultural colonialism in museum exhibits. It is essential for us to be able to discuss these issues from different perspectives without degrading and attacking the personal qualities of the oppositions.

BHM is a good example of this type of conversation. Some prominent African American figures, such as John Willey Price (Dallas County Commissioner for District 3) and Nell Irvin Painter (Princeton University) stated they no longer accept invitations for HM events. Painter stated in 2005 as, "It became a corporate holiday, a way for corporations and museums and the U.S. postal service

to declare they're multicultural bona fide." Some others think BHM is a product and evidence of ongoing racism, segregating Black American from being counted as simply American.

On the other hand, scholars such as Danielle Fuente Morgan (Santa Carla University) and Jenn M. Jackson (Doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago and future assistant professor at Syracuse University) argue the need for BHM. Jackson recalled a 2001 article written by a high school student in which the writer suggested BHM is, "Subtly racist against Blacks because of the unspoken separatist assumptions upon which the month is based. Why do we have Black History Month rather than American History Month?" The high school student went on to say, "To emphasize the past contribution of one race while ignoring those made by others, ignores the important link that binds us all together." Even today, a newspaper commentaries stated, "Black History Month celebrates division rather than unification of the nation, thus alienation rather than reconciliation." Then added that Dr. Martin Luther King desired "character in a color-blind America."

These two statements came from non-black citizens, and Jackson points out the tendency of non-black people to prefer the depiction of "American" over "Black." She states the differences in race, gender, and class are essential and "constitutes the American way of life." February is dedicated to honoring black people "outside of the white lens." Therefore, BHM "isn't racist against anyone. It's a form of reparation." Morgan argues, "Black History Month should be removed in favor of a broad American history. In an ideal world, a separate month for black history would be redundant. But we are not living in an ideal world."

"Black Magic: A Journey of Black Music in America" celebrates the history of Black music in the USA. It is a reminder of important contributions from African and Black culture that has impacted today's music industry in America. The United States' economic power in the entertainment industry, especially music dominates the global stage. I am incredibly excited about this event, and sincerely thank Dr. Sandra Thompson, Troy Anthony Small, Eric Grigg, and Amena Butler for making this happen. As I was at the "Indigenous Visual Sovereignty" exhibition this past November, I am here to learn from another one of the most critical cultures that has been shaping the identity of the United States of America.

Shikoh Shiraiwa  
Archives and Special Collections  
UCO Chambers Library  
Edmond, 2019

## PREFACE

According to author Ron Wellburn, "Black music has been the vanguard reflection of black feeling and the continuous repository of black consciousness." The history of black music reflects the symbolic role that music fulfills in society. B. Lee Cooper explains that for three hundred years, black culture in America chronicled its ideas, attitudes, and history in song form. Yale historian Barbara Moss argues that the pursuit of historical truth helps define self-identity and self-imagery, which are essential elements in black storytelling. The emphasis on personal narrative and the necessity of promoting change in thought and action is part of the rich black tradition of oral history. As activist and journalist Claudia Jones states, "A people's art is the genesis of their freedom."

As it refers to music, the term "Black Magic" is steeped in history and tradition, and has been used with pride and affection for generations. It recalls the "Old Black Magic" of the popular jazz and swing music of the 1940s-1950s, characterized by the recordings of Ella Fitzgerald (often referred to as the First Lady of Song and Queen of Jazz), Sarah Vaughan, and Sammy Davis Jr. The popular soul music of the 1970s-1990s featured the "personification of Black Woman Magic" in Aretha Franklin, the first woman inducted into the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame. As recently as 2003, various artists including India Arie, Missy Elliot and Kelis contributed to a compilation album entitled "Black Magic Woman".

### **Elements of Black Music: Examining Culture & History in American Music**

Enslaved people used music to make their work more tolerable and to preserve their African culture in America. In the antebellum period (from the late 18th century until the start of the American Civil War in 1861), minstrel shows featured white musicians in blackface singing black styles of music. White Americans used black music to develop stereotypes and to promote racial arrogance in an attempt to strengthen racial hierarchy and justify slavery. However, these performances had the unintended effect of promoting black music to a mainstream audience in America. After the Civil War, black musicians took over performing in the minstrel-type shows. It is suggested that for decades blacks performed music as a means of resistance and coded communication. Black bands were often employed by white political candidates to entertain

American voters, even though the bands' members did not enjoy political freedom themselves.

The invention of jazz, an urban hybrid of Creole and Black music styles, made New Orleans the cultural center of Black music in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Jazz was influenced by French orchestral music, Napoleonic military marching band music and African derived call and response rhythms often heard in post-bellum Black churches. The jazz sound evolved into "ragtime," "boogie" and "Delta blues." Comprised of African tonalities, rhythms and performance styles combined with English lyrics and song forms, the blues expressed the tension rising from the sorrows and triumphs of the singer's social conditions. Black itinerant laborers carried these styles of music from agrarian to urban regions throughout the south.

During the 1920s, independent black or "race" records appeared. These records sold mostly to black audiences through word of mouth and through black porters serving on railway lines throughout the south. Eventually, "race music" (a term used to describe black music until the early 1950s) found its way into the hands of a broader white audience. The popularity of the music gave rise to record companies competing to sign black performers to record contracts.

There were two chief classifications of live music broadcast over radio in the 1920s: concert music and big band music. Although both styles had roots in Black music, White musicians received most of the airplay. Few Black musicians received airtime during the Jazz Age. They were sometimes featured on special remote broadcasts from hotels, nightclubs, and dancehalls in urban areas such as Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. Chicago and New York City were more cordial to black artists at this time. The live band performances of Duke Ellington and his orchestra were so popular that his manager was able to move him into the film industry, an unheard of accomplishment. However, the culture of racial exploitation was so pervasive that Ellington's manager, Irving Mills, took one-half of all of Ellington's profits and owned fifty percent of everything that he wrote while under contract.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century trends of industrialization and suburbanization caused southern Blacks to immigrate to northern and western cities, bringing jazz and blues

music with them. This music merged with the urban sound of “black swing” music, characterized by Duke Ellington and Count Basie. Independent record labels capitalized on the new sound, termed “rhythm and blues.” St. Louis, Memphis, and Detroit developed vibrant rhythm and blues scenes, launching the careers of artists such as Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters. The music of Little Richard, Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry held strong appeal among young White Americans, giving rise to popular white rock-n-roll artists such as Bill Haley and Elvis Presley.

The interchange of song and sound are common threads in all African societies, including African diaspora groups. Black American music and Afro-Caribbean musical styles are culturally linked through their West African roots. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, urban environments transformed with the emergence of the technically innovative Jamaican “sound systems” of reggae and ska. This new sound resonated and merged with the music of graffiti artists in black neighborhoods surrounding the entertainment and media outlets of New York. This resulted in the birth of rap and hip-hop, which are the most successful and lucrative music genres of the last two decades.

The impact of black music on the history and culture of the United States has not gone completely unnoticed. On June 7, 1979, President Jimmy Carter proclaimed June “Black Music Month.” A White House reception, featuring performances by Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Andre Crouch, and Billy Eckstine, accompanied the proclamation. In 2000, U.S. Representative Chaka Fattah of Pennsylvania sponsored House Resolution 509, which recognized the importance of black music. In 2009, President Barack Obama redefined June as “African American Music Appreciation Month.” In his official proclamation, he said, “The legacy of African American composers, singers, songwriters, and musicians is an indelible piece of our Nation’s culture. This legacy tells a story of ingenuity and faith. Amidst the injustice of slavery, African Americans lifted their voices to the heavens through spirituals. This sacred music united African-Americans and helped sustain them through one of the darkest periods in our Nation’s history. They have enriched American music and captured the diversity of our Nation.”

### **Celebrating the Economic and Cultural Power of Black Music**

Music, as a cultural industry like art, film, literature, and fashion, is a signify-

cant vehicle for global capital in the United States economy. The American music industry has heavily relied on the emergence of the “Black Urban experience,” a phenomenon that has produced influential and lucrative cultural products for both national and international audiences. Black musical innovations have intermittently infused American popular culture, enriching its blended nature and encouraging the cultural rebellion of disconnected segments of the white population.

However, William Barlow surmises that the result of this cultural transaction is often a misguided and condescending dilution of the original art form. Once it enters the mainstream market, black song is culturally and commercially appropriated and exploited. Black music can be described as music by, for, and about Black people. It has always been culturally and community driven. Nevertheless, the business model of music production allows corporations to control the cultural experience.

This principle lends itself to the idea that popular music does not simply hold entertainment value. It provides material for scholars to research and write about race, class, and gender in American culture. Scholars of different disciplines have discovered common interests in the academic study of popular music, combining critical methods of music philosophy, aesthetics, and analysis with the understanding of the cultural and historical context of music. Demonstrating the importance of this field of study, American historian Nell Irvin Painter states that without knowledge or acknowledgment of the past, “we risk the loss of Black history out of popular culture entirely.”

### **Of Note: Black Music in Oklahoma**

Black music in Oklahoma emerged out of the same harsh conditions that existed throughout the nineteenth-century Deep South. Slaves of African descent accompanied their American Indian owners from the southeastern United States when the Cherokee, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, and Chickasaw tribes were forcibly removed to Indian Territory. In this environment, the same work songs, field hollers, spirituals, and riverboat music evolved as they did in the rest of the southern states. After the Civil War, the tribes either set the slaves free and gave them a parcel of land and/or money, or granted them tribal membership as “freedmen.”

In the second half of the nineteenth century, increased access to music and mentors helped African American musicians from Oklahoma develop their musical skills and evolve into jazz artists. Oklahoma's major cities, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, served as training grounds for Oklahoma jazz artists. Oklahoma gave birth to jazz legends Jay McShann, Claude Williams, Barney Kessel, Don Byas, and Aaron Bell.

Because of its rural orientation, sparse population, and few metropolitan centers, Oklahoma failed to retain most of its noteworthy professional jazz musicians. A vast majority of Oklahoman musicians migrated from the State and were employed to perform in big bands and bebop combos in major American cities. Many of them left for places where jazz was more readily accepted and there were more professional facilities for recording and radio work, such as Kansas City, Los Angeles and New York.

That is not to say that Oklahoma did not maintain a vibrant and thriving jazz scene. In the 1920s, the African American business and cultural district in Oklahoma City, known as "Deep Deuce" (the cross section of NE 2nd St. and N. Central Ave.), became the core of Oklahoma City's jazz renaissance. Deep Deuce became an important resource for national jazz and blues bands seeking talented musicians, who were often classically trained. A cultural center for African Americans, the district featured nightclubs, supper clubs, and legendary dance halls that catered to jazz enthusiasts, including Aldridge Theater, Ruby's Grill, and Rushing's Café. These venues featured outstanding local acts, many of whom achieved national acclaim, such as Jimmy Rushing and Charlie Christian. Deep Deuce also gave birth to one of the most influential early jazz bands in the country: the Oklahoma City Blue Devils.

Deep Deuce existed as an important cultural and economic center for African Americans in Oklahoma City until the late 1950s. The name Deep Deuce has been trademarked, and an apartment complex built at the location in 2001 carries that title. There are few physical remnants of this legendary district. Three properties in the Deep Deuce area are on the National Register of Historic Places, Calvary Baptist Church (NR 78002244), Littlepage Hotel Building (NR 95001500), and Melvin Luster House (NR 83002101).

The Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma was dubbed America's "Black Wall Street" by none other than noted author and educator Booker T. Washington. The district, spanning 35-blocks and surrounding the corner of Greenwood

Avenue and Archer Street, became a prosperous center for black commerce in the early 1900s. A hotbed for jazz and blues music, it is the site where Count Basie first encountered big band jazz. Tulsa's Greenwood District offered a number of jazz outlets, such as The Rhythm Club, Casa Dell, Rialto Theater, and The Hole. The Tulsa scene developed bands led by Ernie Fields, Al Den- nie, and Clarence Love. It produced numerous other jazz luminaries, including Howard McGhee, Earl Bostic, and Cecil McBee.

The Greenwood District was the richest African-American neighborhood in North America. All of that changed on June 1, 1921, when events known as the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot occurred. In less than 48 hours, more than 36 square blocks were burned to the ground, with more than 200 African-Americans murdered, over 10,000 African-American left homeless, and more than 2,000 business destroyed (including churches, hospitals, grocery stores, and others). To date, the Tulsa Race Riot is the single deadliest and most destructive act of racial violence and domestic terrorism in United States history.

Without a single penny from the city, the county, the state, or the federal gov- ernment, the District came back stronger than ever. Less than a decade after the destruction, there were over 100 more active businesses in the district than there were before. In January 2019, the Greenwood Cultural District was awarded \$1 million from the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Grant to create multiple public art projects to celebrate and commemorate the legacy of Black Wall Street.

Amena Butler,  
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## A JOURNEY OF BLACK MUSIC IN AMERICA

By

Dr. Sandra Thompson

To begin the journey of Black Music in America, you must go back to Africa, the birthplace of Black Music in America. You could start with the instruments hand made for tribal ceremonies, births, deaths, religious ceremonies, the kalimba (mbira), the calabash gourd, the pan flute, the d'jembe, among others. The instruments were hewn from different shapes of wood with added metal or strings or other materials to make beautiful music.

African-American music began on the slave ships transporting captured men and women to the colonies of the New Americas. The ships were built to carry hundreds in shackles to the States. They learned how to communicate as they traveled thousands of miles, shackled to each other. The captives had been kings and queens, officials, historians; they came to America to become slaves, field hands, nannies, whatever the plantation owners and the field foremen needed them to be. The music of Black America started in the bowels of those ships.

The first music on the plantation was field hollers, used to provide a constant rhythm to help motivate the slaves to pick as much cotton, chop trees or whatever work needed to be completed. The field hollers, or work songs, were also used to communicate or to vent their feelings of the cruelty they encountered. The field holler has origins in West Africa. This oral tradition (music not written) became the basis of the blues scale, the flatted third, sixth and seventh became one of the bases of this style of music. Field hollers also used the body as an instrument, the combination of the voice with clapping hands, and stomping feet created a musical language no one had ever used before. The strong, rhythmic pulse helped regulate the rhythm of their movements, sometimes easing the exhaustion of the work.



Another form of Black music is the spiritual, traditionally an unaccompanied choral composition sung during a religious service. The spiritual first began as a call and response, similar to the field holler.

Call - Lord, I keep so busy praisin' my Jesus  
Response - Keep so busy praisin' my Jesus  
Keep so busy praisin' my Jesus

Ain't got time  
Call - 'Cause when I'm healin' de sick  
Response - I'm praisin' my Jesus

Call - 'Cause when I'm healin' de sick  
Response - I'm praisin' my Jesus

Call - 'Cause when I'm healin' de sick  
Response - I'm praisin' my Jesus

Call and response was also needed; many of the slaves were unable to read, thereby the necessity for 'call and response'. Another popular method used on Sunday morning service was the 'brush harbor'. Couldn't have church too close to the house, it was against the rules. In the service in the 'harbor' the 'minister' or the chosen leader of the service would often 'line a hymn' and the worshippers would follow in response. The lined hymn was another way everyone participated in service. There was a specific tune for the leader, and the worshippers would follow with the exact same words, but a different tune to complete the stanza.

This year, 2019 marks 400 years since Blacks were brought to this country. While the majority of Blacks taken from their homeland did not come here, the struggles of our race have been many. After the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 was signed, the Civil War ended, there was no slavery, but there was also no equality. Blacks musicians could entertain people in Las Vegas, and all of the exclusive venues in the United States, but they could not stay in a room in the hotels; Black athletes won gold medals, and played on championship teams, but they had to enter through the back door and through the kitchen to go to the awards ceremonies. This short abstract covers only the first 244 years of Black music in American. There are more stories to tell.

## LANGSTON HUGHES IN ART SONG

by Troy Anthony Small

Langston Hughes is one of the most revered writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. More than a poet, Hughes was also a playwright and novelist. He is not only one of the more pivotal figures of the Harlem Renaissance, but in all American 20<sup>th</sup> century writing. Per Grove, his works have been “set by about 60 composers with over 200 song settings of his poetry,” including Howard Swanson (1909-1978), Dr. Robert Owens (1925-2017), and Margaret Bonds (1913-1972). However, as celebrated as Hughes is today, many may be surprised at the interesting and sometimes challenging situations of his early life.

James Mercer Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri on February 1, 1902. His father, James Nathaniel Hughes, and his mother, Caroline “Carrie” Mercer Langston Hughes separated soon after his birth and divorced while he was a young child. When the Hughes’ separated, James Nathaniel left for Cuba, then settled in Mexico. The young James Langston moved to Lawrence, Kansas with his mother where she grew up. While living in his grandmother Mary’s home, James Langston and his mother were impoverished. In 1907, James Nathaniel and Carrie attempted a reconciliation. As a result she and James Langston subsequently moved to Mexico to be with James Nathaniel. When the reconciliation failed, James Langston and his mother returned to Lawrence. During this period of James Langston’s life, Carrie was frequently absent as she struggled to find work. During these periods James Langston would live with his aging grandmother, Mary Langston. In 1908, James Langston moved to Topeka, Kansas to live with his mother and start school but, returned to Lawrence and his grandmother the following year. His grandmother died in 1915 and James Langston then moved to Lincoln, Illinois to live with his mother and her second husband, Homer Clark. There, James Langston began the eighth grade and upon his graduation in 1916, was named class poet.

That same year Carrie and Homer gained employment at a steel mill in Cleveland, Ohio, where James Langston began high school. During these years James Langston was a regular contributor to his high school literary magazine, *The Central High Monthly Magazine*. In it, he began to publish short stories and verse; much of these works showed the influence of Carl Sandburg and

Walt Whitman—poets he was introduced to by one of his teachers and whom he would later cite as being influential.

In 1920, James Langston was elected class poet and editor of his high school annual. After graduating later that year, he moved to Mexico to live with his father. While living with his father and teaching school in Mexico, James Langston clashed frequently with his father over his desire to be a writer. In June of 1921, he published his poem *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* in “The Crisis” magazine; *Rivers* marked a turning point from his previously published poems in *The Brownie’s Book*, a magazine published monthly from January 1920 to December 1921 by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). *Rivers* is also a poem which has been set to song by a several composers, including Howard Swanson.

Composer Howard Swanson was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1909, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 1917. After attending public school, he enrolled at the Cleveland Institute of Music. There, he studied composition with Herbert Elwell. In 1937, Swanson won a *Rosenwald Fellowship* and studied in France with Nadia Boulanger. He is also the winner of a grant from the American Academy of Arts and the winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Swanson died in 1978. The power of his arrangement in *Rivers* is built-up by the prelude and the constant repetition of the eighth note followed by the dotted quarter in cut time (2/2). This figure creates a driving rhythm and a sense of urgency passion and power. The “b” section beginning at measure 34 offers a retrospective landscape, initiated by the text “I bathed in the Euphrates...” The opera singer Marion Anderson performed the song at Carnegie Hall in January of 1950.

Four years after the publication of Hughes’ *Rivers* poem, *I, Too!*—one of his most well-known—was published in *New Negro* magazine, though it had been written the year prior. At that time, Hughes was on his second voyage to Europe as a seaman. His first was in June of 1923 aboard the “*West Hesseltine*, a steamship trading up and down the coast of West Africa.” He jumped ship in Paris where he settled for a few months working as a cook in the Montmartre nightclub *Le grand Duc*.

While vacationing in Genoa, he lost his passport and was stranded; it was during this time Hughes wrote the poem *I, too*. One can only imagine his experiences which inspired such text as “They send me to eat in the kitchen when



company comes...” Margaret Bonds arranged the poem to complete her song cycle titled *Three Dream Portraits*.

Composer/pianist Margaret Bonds was born in Chicago on March 3, 1913. She was the daughter of Dr. Monroe Alpheus Majors a physician and organist Estelle Bonds who was Majors’ second wife. Margaret “first studied with her mother whose home was a gathering place for black writers, artists and musicians, including the composers Will Marion Cook and Florence Price;” Bonds studied piano and composition with Price while in high school. After earning her Bachelor of Music (BM) and Master of Music (MM) degrees from Northwestern University, she completed additional studies at Julliard. There, “she studied piano with Djane Herz and composition with Starer.”

Bonds opened the Allied Arts Academy in Chicago in the 1930’s and “was active as a pianist in Canada and the USA.” Her “output consists largely of vocal music.” Bonds is best known for her “spirituals for solo voice with or without chorus.” The soprano Leontyne Price commissioned and recorded some of her spiritual arrangements in the 1960’s. Bonds is the winner of several awards, including a Wanamaker Award in 1932 for her song *Sea Ghost*, a Roy Harris award and a Rosenwald Fellowship. With her 1933 performance of her piano concerto at the World’s Fair, she became the, “first Black soloist to appear with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.” She also composed large musical theater works including *Shakespeare In Harlem*, *Romey and Julie*, and *U.S.A.* Bonds moved to New York in 1939 and married Lawrence Richardson in 1940 “though she retained the surname ‘Bonds’ throughout her life.” Bonds died on April 26, 1972. A month after her death, her final major work—*Credo*—was performed, “by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra under Mehta.” The *Portraits* cycle is one in Bonds’ larger body of works and one of many cycles composed using Hughes’ poetry, including *Mortal Storm* (op. 29) —a cycle composed by Robert Owens.

Composer Robert Owens was born in Denison, Texas in 1925 and grew up in Berkley, California. His mother Alpharetta Helms-Owens was a pianist. Emulating her he began playing piano at the age of four, composing at eight, and performing publicly at ten. He wrote and performed his first piano concerto at age 15 with Berkley’s Young Peoples’ Symphony under the direction of Jessica Marcelli. From 1946-1950, after serving in the military, he continued his

musical studies in Paris under Jules Gentil and renowned pianist Alfred Cortot at L’École Normale de Musique. Owens made his formal debut as a concert pianist in Copenhagen in 1952. The performance was met with rave reviews. He briefly returned to the U.S. to teach, but moved to Germany to work and live for the remainder of his life. Owens composed *Mortal Storm* in 1965 for Thomas Carey. Carey commissioned the work after having won first prize in the Ard International Competition in 1963 by singing Owens’ *Four Motivations*. *Storm*, however, marked a turn in the composer’s songwriting he stated in his own words, “I moved from the realms of Schubert lieder and demanded of the singer the passion and drama of opera.” In addition to being a concert pianist and composer, Owens was an accomplished stage actor, He performed such roles as The Professor in *The Lesson*, a one-act play by Eugène Ionesco (1909-1994), and the title role in Shakespeare’s *Othello*. Owens died in 2017. As stated earlier, Hughes’ poetry has been set to over 200 songs by over 60 composers; that said, he should not only be recognized for his contributions to writing, but also for his contributions to music and art song.

## PERFORMANCE BIOS

**Eric Grigg** is in his fifth year as a full-time staff accompanist and vocal coach for the University of Central Oklahoma School of Music. In addition to playing voice lessons and musical theater classes, he coaches dozens of singers each year. Eric also acts as music director for UCO's Opera Workshop class and the spring musicals at the UCO Jazz Lab, including Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along* this coming April. Eric's professional credits include nearly sixty productions at Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, as well as many appearances with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic, where he has been a featured collaborator with Broadway star Kristin Chenoweth and a featured soloist on George Gershwin's Variations on *I Got Rhythm*.

**Troy Anthony Small** began as a singer-songwriter, making beats and appearing in poetry slams in Tulsa during the early 2000's. In 2004, he decided to focus on music theory and in 2006, he began formal theory training. Soon after, he shifted focus from theory and production to opera and classical voice. For over a decade he studied, tutored, and performed classically. Troy received a Bachelor of Music (B.M.) degree in May of 2015, and Master of Music (M.M.) with Honors in Vocal Performance in May of 2018—both from The University of Central Oklahoma. Past operatic roles include “Sherriff of Richmond” in Flowtow's *Martha*, “Donkey” in Henry Mollicone's *Starbird*, “The Captain” in *The Sound of Music*, “Hysterium” in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, “Superintendent Budd” in Britten's *Albert Herring*, “The Foreman” in *Trial by Jury*, “Don Andreas” in Offenbach's *La Perichole*, “Belcore” in Donizetti's, *L'Elisir D'Amore*, as well as “Sarastro” and “Sprecher,” in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

In 2013, Troy was a featured soloist on composer Michael Colgrass's recording of *Zululand* and in the *Duke Ellington Sacred Masterworks* concert at Mitchell Hall Theater. He sang second bass in *The University of Central Oklahoma's Chamber Singers* and was a regularly featured soloist during their jazz performances until the spring of 2017. In October of 2018, he recorded the song *Headache*, which was released on Spotify, TIDAL and Apple Music the following month. Troy continues to teach students privately in piano, voice, music theory. He began a publishing company as a member of the *American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)*.

## SPONSORSHIP

### Inclusion in Art

**Inclusion In Art** is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting racial and cultural diversity in Oklahoma's visual arts community through exhibitions, workshops, creative projects and lectures. The organization works to support artists of color by connecting communities through socially conscious presentations that challenge the mind and embrace progressive thought.

The initiative began as a small collective of African American visual artists, Nathan Lee, Suzanne Thomas, and Robert Skip Hill. The collective grew quickly and in December 2005, **Inclusion In Art** held its first prominent exhibition entitled “*Defining and Defying*” at the Individual Artists of Oklahoma's gallery. The event saw the largest non-fundraising opening that year, drawing in members of the African American community as well as patrons of Oklahoma's visual arts community. The success of this exhibition led to greater visibility and awareness of the diversity within Oklahoma's visual arts community.

Riding on this momentum Nathan Lee took a leading role in the future of **Inclusion in Art**. Their second prominent show, “*SKIN*” focused on the social issues of internalized racism, society's notion of physical beauty, and identity. Their sophomore effort drew positive reviews from Oklahoma art critic John Brandenburg and art patrons alike. It sparked an even greater interest in artists of color working and exhibiting in Oklahoma.

As Lee recognized this interest, he made the decision to become an activist for racial diversity in the arts and began reaching out to other visual artists of color. As his work expanded he began receiving invitations to participate on panels, think tanks, and conferences locally and nationally. Lee used this platform of increased visibility to promote **Inclusion in Art** throughout the State. Working together with other artists of color Lee began cultivating connections with the Oklahoma visual arts community.

Many artists of color found **Inclusion In Art** provided new exposure for their work. Galleries like Living Arts Tulsa, the Individual Artist of Oklahoma, Mainsite Gallery and others in the state turned to **Inclusion In Art** to connect

them to these largely undiscovered artists. The connections **Inclusion In Art** had formed with these galleries resulted in exhibitions for these artists, for some it was their first showing. **Inclusion In Art** produced “*Transcend*” the first film about contemporary Black visual artists living and working in Oklahoma. This launched “*In Color*” the first annual film event focusing on filmmakers of color.

In 2014, **Inclusion In Art** gained a dedicated space at 1219 Creative. During this time they held monthly exhibitions, workshops, lectures and social events. In 2018, the group shifted its focus back to building connection and let go of their space. Through the energy of a volunteer board of directors, the group initiated collaborations with local visual arts and other community organizations. **Inclusion In Art** worked with organizations such as Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition, The Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Oklahoma Contemporary, The Art Hall, and also held programming at the UCO Chesapeake Boathouse and Dunlap and Coddling. Through these efforts they hoped to create lasting and meaningful relationships between these organizations, and the diverse audiences and artists throughout Oklahoma.

One of **Inclusion In Art's** most recent and prominent projects is their annual Mentorship program. The program began with a pilot that explored the pairing of an emerging artist with a mid-career artist. The following year the group implemented an expanded project selecting two emerging artists to work closely with **Inclusion In Art's**, Visual Arts Committee. With guidance from the committee, both artists successfully secured grant funding through OVAC Connecting with artists of color who inspire them, they put together an exhibition at Oklahoma Contemporary. This exposure provided them opportunities to exhibit their work locally and nationally. **Inclusion In Art** will be selecting their next artist in February 2019, with an exhibition showcasing the artists work at Little D Gallery in the Paseo Arts District, in August 2019.

Bryon Perdue, Jr.  
President, Inclusion In Art

## OKLAHOMA ARTISTS

**Marjorie Bontemps** received a baccalaureate diploma at the Institut Catholique de Paris in Paris, France, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma. She is currently a Museum Science & Management graduate student at the University of Tulsa. In 2013, Bontemps was acknowledged for her philanthropic work in the Tulsa Arts District with the Governor's Arts Award for Community Service from the Oklahoma Arts Council. Her artwork was recognized in 2017 with the Merit Graphic Award from the Oklahoma Art Guild. Bontemps is best known for her realistic photos of humanity in urban settings and art objects. She deftly captures people respond to each other, things, and places by photographing unassuming details of expression and movement. There is a granular instance where humanity and nature spark in everything she photographs.

She achieves emotional depth by arranging subjects to illustrate her ideas. Playfulness is vivid; bodies are elemental, pure emotion is inherent in her subjects, and her lens unveils them to expose their truest selves. “When I'm taking pictures, I'm always exploring with my imagination to see what the lens can and not capture,” she says. Bontemps is interested in exploring diverse modes of thinking, creating and practicing often with social engagement or community focus. Her other interest, producing projects that position people, things and culture above all else. She has shown her work in various juried group exhibits including Oh' Tulsa Biennial at Living Arts Gallery and the Philbrook Museum of Art. In addition to cultivating her art-photography, she has curated art shows, served on art gallery selection committees, and served on the boards of Living Arts, Theatre Tulsa, Tulsa Opera, Tulsa Youth Symphony and other non-profits organizations.



*Rockin' it on Route 66-Soul Music*

**Amena Butler** is a Mixed Media artist based in Oklahoma City. She grew up in Far-East Asia, where her art education began. Amena is able to combine her not so

The “Route 36” sign is placed on a gas station wall in North Tulsa (Black community). I photographed it because it spoke to me when I saw it. My first impression was how it symbolized black community pride, culture and history. The accomplishments of Black Wall Street in the Greenwood district, before and after the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. The famous three Wilson brothers who started the R&B Funk band "The Gap Band" during the 70's and the 80's were from that community in North Tulsa.”

Route 36 is to north Tulsa's what Route 66 represents to other side of Tulsa (South, East, and West) not just in geography, demographics, and economics. So, there is not 'per se' an actual Route 36 history landmark in North Tulsa, but rather the concept the Route 36 represents for that community. Even with their living condition, (not having a lot to live on, car was stolen, thus, remembering on that same street where Terrence Crutcher got shot by the police officer Shelby), music is like medicine to them especially listening to the soul story of black music.



*I Hear the Music*

formal art education with the freedom of experimentation using various mediums on an array of substrates.

As a graduate student in the Museum Studies program at UCO, I have had the opportunity to work with diverse collections in the Archives and Special Collections department of the Chambers Library. Utilizing pieces from the Melton Art Reference Library Collection, and artworks on loan from my outreach efforts to Oklahoma artists, I have curated numerous exhibits on all four floors of the Chambers Library.



*Music Conversation*

Art communicates the personal emotions of an individual artists telling the history of a people, the story of a civilization. It is essential to improving the quality of life.

**Jaiye Farrell** is an Oklahoma-based artist that cultivated his style of painting from abstract patterns that transcend societal and cultural divides and remember the communal roots of humanity. From an infatuation with



*Asemic Music*

archeology emerged a creative and ambitious talent: to craft signature designs that inspire self-reflection. “Typically, I start with a void (black canvas) because that comes from a place of wonder and I want to explore that. When there is a void and I am committed to exploring it, intuition becomes fluid. This is how I paint my white lines on black canvases: with intuition as my guidance. Sometimes I have an outline that I follow but it is not a boundary. I often veer into nonlinear movements because they move out of stagnancy. That is how you create a rhythm and a circulation.”



*Sovereignty I*

verses a multitude of ideas along with the methods and materials that she sees fit. Ranging from ideas of spirituality, therapy, and connections and provisions like textiles, papers, and charcoal. Jasmine is constantly integrating areas of her life into her artwork and vice versa.

**Jasmine Jones** is a multidisciplinary artist from Midwest City, Oklahoma. She graduated from Rose State College in 2016 with her Associate in Arts and in 2018 from the University of Oklahoma with her B.F.A. in Studio Art. Jones has been featured in various shows in Norman and Oklahoma City and is inspired by artists such as Chloë Bass and Kara Walker, along with her family history, and the everyday manner. Through her work, Jasmine trans-



*Gilded II*

**Suzanne Thomas-Justice** was born and raised in Spencer, Oklahoma. She received her bachelors of Fine Arts, from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, and graduated with a Masters of Fine Arts in Painting from the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. She is a tenured Professor of Art at Rose State College, Midwest City, Oklahoma, where she is also co-advisor for the college chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. Suzanne is working Mixed Media artists and Painter in Oklahoma. She is very active in the local and state Arts community, by serving on the Board of Inclusion in Art, the Visual Arts Committee for Individual Artists of Oklahoma, and the Omlette Party Fundraiser for the Oklahoma City Museum of

Art. Suzanne worked in other vocations before pursuing a full time career as a teacher and artist. She creates, exhibits, and teaches art with no regrets.



*Each panel represents a song*

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